Upgradation of Airports in North Eastern Region

*211. SHRI SUDHIR RANJAN MAJUMDAR : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether only two airports in the North Eastern Region have been selected for upgradation as model airports alongwith some others in the country;

(b) if so, what is the criteria adopted for the selection thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that Agartala airport is not in this list; and

(d) if so, what are the reason therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI MADHAV RAO SCINDIA) : (a) Guwahati and Imphal airports, to start with have been selected to be developed as Model Airports.

(b) The airports have been selected having regard inter-alia to their growth potential in each region.

(c) and (d) Agartala airport, though not included in the list of proposed Model airports, is slated for development of its various facilities e.g., runway, terminal building and landing aids.

Debt Servicing Crisis

*212. SHRI SUKOMAL SEN : Will the Minister of Finance be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the country is facing a debt servicing crisis since August this year;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor; and

(c) what steps have been taken by Government to save the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

Income Tax Exemption to Blood Donation Programmes

*213. DR. ABRAR AHMED : SHRI SUDHIR RANJAN MAJUMDAR :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to amend the Income-Tax Act to extend exemption to individuals and corporate bodies who join the blood donation programmes; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR) : (a) Under section 11 of the Income-tax Act, 1961 exemption is available in respect of income to various institutions/trusts etc. carrying on charitable activities. Monetary donations to such trusts/institutions by individuals and corporate bodies are also exempt under section 80G of the Income-tax Act subject to certain conditions and ceilings. Since programme of blood donation can be considered as a charitable activity, any blood donation programme also qualifies for such income-tax exemptions. There is thus no necessity to amend the Income-tax Act in this regard. Donations in kind are, however, not exempt. Accordingly, there is no proposal for granting any exemption under the Income-tax Act in respect of voluntary service or donation of blood itself.

(b) In view of (a) above, the question does not arise.

Development of Tourist Circuits and Destinations in Madhya Pradesh

214. CHOWDHRY HARI SINGH Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) what are the tourist circuits and tourist destinations to be developed in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat under the Tourism Action Plan;